

IV.—*Note on the two Flamingoes of South Africa.*

By C. J. ANDERSSON.

1. PHENICOPTERUS ERYTHRÆUS, Verreaux.

This Flamingo is very abundant at Walvisch Bay, Sandwich Harbour, Angra Pequena, the mouth of the Orange River, and probably in many other places on the south-west coast of South Africa—at least to the north of Walvisch Bay; it is also met with in a few inland localities, such as Lake Ngami, Lake Onandova, &c. With rare exceptions (and these not well authenticated, but merely surmised from birds being sometimes found barely able to fly), the Flamingoes do not breed in any of the coast-localities above named, nor do I know where they go to nest. All that I myself have observed, or otherwise can learn, is, that on the approach of the breeding-season they all wing their way to the northward; and it is very probable that they breed on some of the less accessible and less disturbed lagoons and shallows rumoured to exist between Walvisch Bay and Great Fish Bay. The old birds always return first.

The Flamingoes are invariably well-conditioned, and frequently enormously fat; their chief food consists of small Crustacea, sea-animalcula, sea-grass, &c. They are good eating, more especially the young birds; but, having a rather strong fishy flavour, they require to be well cooked and spiced; they ought also to be cleansed of all fatty matter, and perhaps eat best when served up in pies or curries.

In the newly fledged bird the bill and legs are of a very dark purple, so much so as to give these parts, at a little distance, the appearance of being quite black.

The head, neck, throat, and breast are greyish, with the shafts of the feathers dusky, the back of the neck being darkest in hue, and gradually deepening in shade as it approaches the back. The wing-coverts, scapulars, and upper parts of the back are yellowish grey; spurious wings pinkish, the feathers for about half an inch from the ends being a dirty light yellowish brown; primaries and secondaries dark brown; tertials white at the base, gradually shading off into yellowish grey. Upper parts of the belly dusky white, or nearly so; the under wing-coverts pale

pink or dirty white; back and upper tail-coverts whitish, faintly washed with pink, and with a dusky blotch or stripe along the shaft of each feather. Tail faint roseate white, with the outer veins of the feathers broadly edged with greyish brown, the very outermost edge being sometimes flushed with a pale pink. Throughout almost the entire plumage, the shafts of the feathers are more or less dusky, occasionally running into blotches and patches of a dirty whitish brown.

As the bird approaches its adult stage, the bill becomes more elongated, and only the extremities of the mandibles remain black, the central and basal portions of the bill becoming bluish; the grey colour of the plumage nearly disappears, except about the wings, and in its place white predominates, the head, neck, and throat only remaining a little dusky; the pinkish scarlet under the wings brightens, and large irregular markings of a similar colour appear on the outside of the wings also.

In the adult bird the whole of the bill is pink, except the tips of the mandibles, which remain black. The wings, under wing-coverts, and tertials are scarlet (the spurious wings and tertials being palest); the secondary quills are glossy black; the primaries are so on the outer edges only, the other parts of those feathers being of a sooty brown; the primaries have also on the inside a longitudinal dark-brown stripe on either side of the shaft. The head, neck, shoulders, scapulars, breast, belly, and under tail-coverts white, very faintly flushed with scarlet; the back, upper tail-coverts, and upper surface of tail white, beautifully and harmoniously tinted with scarlet-pink. Legs and toes scarlet-pink; nails brownish black, shading off into light horn-colour on the edges.

2. *PHENICOPTERUS MINOR*, Geoff. St. Hilaire.

Phaenicopterus parvus, Vieillot.

This Flamingo is of rare occurrence here; at least, I have met with it very sparingly.

In the adult bird the form of the bill is precisely that of the newly fledged young of the preceding species; its colour is as follows:—the basal part is of a dull brownish purple, the parts adjoining being vermilion, which deepens into crimson-red

bordered by black, which is shaded off into a light horn-colour towards the extremities of the mandibles. The general ground-colour of the whole plumage is white, overlaid, as it were, with a delicate transparent tint of the purest scarlet, passing into rose-colour or delicate crimson on the lower parts. This deeper hue is arranged in semi-oval patches, generally occupying the exposed part of the feathers, and being most decided towards their extremities, leaving a border of about a line in breadth of a paler tint, which sometimes approaches to white. The plumage has, in consequence of this arrangement of colour, the appearance of being plated or mailed. The under wing-coverts are pinkish red; and the long inside feathers at the third joint of the wing are deep red, paling off at the outer edges to a scarlet-white. The inside of the primary and secondary quills is of a faint reddish brown; the legs and toes are crimson-scarlet; the nails brownish black, shading into light horn-colour at the edges.

At a little distance, and with the light full upon it, this bird has a most beautiful appearance; indeed it is a perfect gem amongst the feathered tribes.

The following Table will show the comparative dimensions of the two species, though I think that *P. erythræus* varies in size a good deal.

	<i>P. erythræus.</i>			<i>P. minor.</i>		
	feet.	in.	lines.	feet.	in.	lines.
Entire length.....	3	10	6	2	6	—
Wings when folded	1	4	—	1	—	6
Tarsus	1	—	3	—	7	2
Middle toe.....	—	4	—	—	3	—
Tibia	—	8	—	—	4	3
Tail, measured from the small oil-gland on the rump	—	6	6	—	5	6
Bill, measured along the curve of the upper mandible						
	—	5	9	—	4	2

[Mr. Andersson's notes were accompanied by drawings, by Mr. Baines, from which it would appear that, in the adults of both species, and likewise in the immature stages of *P. erythræus*, the bare skin between the bill and the eye is of the same colour with the base of the bill; also that the irides in both species are orange.—J. H. G.]

